

Denise A. Desmond
28 Billingham St.
Somerville, Ma. 02144
June 27, 1989

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

1989 AUG -1 AM 11:46

CAMBRIDGE MA.
Cambridge City Council
795 Mass Ave
Cambridge, Ma. 02139

Dear Cambridge City Council,

I am writing to you concerning an issue which disturbs me greatly. On Sunday, July 23, I went to my grandmother's residence which is the Miller's River Apt. Building on 15 Lambert St. in Cambridge. I arrived at approximately 3:45 p.m. and was somewhat concerned because she hadn't answered my telephone calls earlier in the day. She didn't answer when I knocked at the door, but I thought I heard her television going. I went downstairs to the lobby and asked other residents of the building if they had seen her that day. Some people said they saw her go on that day's trip. One woman even told me she was positive that she saw my grandmother

get on the bus. With this information in mind, I wasn't alarmed enough to call the fire dept. and have them break the door down. I did, however, have some reservations because I didn't think my grandmother would run the risk of missing my father's birthday party which we were going to have late afternoon. I know the office of the building has a copy of every resident's key. I found myself frustrated because the office was closed and no one in the building had a key to the office. I called the Cambridge Housing Authority and the woman who answered my call at about 4:00 p.m. told me to call back in 10 or 15 minutes because the one maintenance person on duty may have been answering to an emergency. I called back in 5 or 10 minutes and was

told that someone was on his way. It was a few minutes past 5:00 when I got into my grandmother's apartment, finding her fallen on the floor from a massive stroke. She had been there all day, or possibly since sometime after 6:00 from the night before.

I realize that getting into my grandmother's apartment sooner wouldn't have changed the fact that she had a stroke, but I could have alleviated her fear sooner as she was semi-conscious when I found her. Or perhaps it could have meant her having a less severe case of pneumonia now since much of what she vomited while on the floor went into her lungs.

My call to the Cambridge Housing Authority on Monday July 24 was not as productive as →

I would have liked. Although the woman who answered my call was sympathetic, she informed me that she doubts the system will change. I understand that there probably isn't enough money to keep the office open on weekends but why can't someone who lives in the building have a key to the office? Why can't residents of the building be instructed to issue copies of their apartment key to relatives? Why aren't residents told to tell their families that the fire dept. has a key to the office?

I realize that these issues aren't the sole responsibility of the Cambridge Housing Authority or the Cambridge City Council.

I do feel however, that society has a responsibility for taking care of its elders and any measures that can be taken to protect our elders should be taken. My guess is that this situation can easily repeat itself at another time with different people. All that can be done should be to reduce the anxiety and facilitate the care of our elderly in similar circumstances. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Denise A. Desmond

RECEIVED BY
OFFICE OF CITY CLERK
1989 AUG -1 AM 11:22
CAMBRIDGE, MA.

Comm. from Denise A. Desmond, relating her efforts to see her grandmother (a resident of the Miller's River Apt. Bldg) on July 23, 1989 & her efforts to secure a key to the apartment in order to do so. (Upon entering she found her grandmother on the floor, apparently for some time, after having suffered a massive stroke). Said comm. urging that any measures possible be taken in order to protect other elders in future.

In City Council,

August 7, 1989

*Referred to the City Mgr &
Exec Dir of the Housing
Authority
Copies sent to C. Mgr 8/9/89*